

A N  
ANSWER  
TO THE  
**Dissenters Objections**  
Against the  
COMMON PRAYERS,  
And some other Parts of  
Divine - Service,  
Prescribed in the  
LITURGY  
OF THE  
CHURCH of ENGLAND.

*By W. Clayton*

L O N D O N :

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**I** Believe all Considering Persons are by this time sensible what advantage the *Papists* make of the Separation of some *Protestants* from the *Church of England*. And the ill effects of it at present, and the worse which we have reason to fear, are so very discernable, that it may now be hoped the Consideration hereof will something abate those Prejudices of Dissenters against us, which we think have hitherto hindered the Prevailing of our Reasons. Though Prejudice is hard to be remov'd, yet 'tis not impossible. Several Ingenuous Persons of that Persuasion have been rescu'd from their Prejudices against our Communion, when the mischief of these Divisions was not so apparent as 'tis now. I trust therefore, that at this time many more will, and I pray God that all of them may seriously and impartially look over the

Grounds upon which they have kept up the Separation. For I am persuaded, that their Objections against our Communion are not of that Consequence, as to Justifie their forsaking it; and that themselves would discern it, if they would consider our Answers with the same Meekness and Charity wherewith we offer them. I have with great pleasure read some short Discourses lately Publisht that tend to this purpose, the Good Spirit wherewith they are written seeming to be a very likely means of conveying the Argument with all its advantage into the Minds of those that shall take the pains to read them. And though I think that which hath been said already, is enough to satisfy Judicious Men, yet by the persuasion of some Friends, I have taken upon me to Answer those Particular Objections against the Publick Service of God by the *Book of Common Prayer*, which the Dissenters are said to insist most upon. I must confess, that I have always thought the *Liturgy of the Church of England* to be such a truly Evangelical Form of Publick Worship, that it would rather have invited Protestants to our Communion, than kept them from it. And I believe, if the Dissenters would seriously read over that Sermon of Dr. Beverege, concerning the *Excellency and Usefulness of the Common Prayer*, they would go near to be of the same mind. And I hope many of them are so, excepting only as to those Particulars wherein they are not so well satisfied: And therefore I shall endeavour, through God's assistance, to lay some things together, of which People of ordinary Capacities may make a Judgment, and which may afford reasonable satisfaction to those that Doubt.

It is by some pretended, That the *Confessions of Sin* in our Liturgy are too General, and that there are many Particular Sins which ought to have been Distinctly Confessed, of which there is no mention.

Now I desire those that are of this Mind to consider, that there is hardly any thing in Publick Worship which requires more Caution and Prudence in the ordering of it, than that Confession of Sin which is to be made by the whole Congregation: It may be too Loose and General on the one side, or it may be too Particular and Distinct on the other. And it is not so very easie to avoid both inconveniencies. The reason is, because it should be framed as all may in good earnest use it, notwithstanding the great Difference amongst those that are within the



the Communion of the Church; the Sins of some of them being more in *number*, and greater in *kind*, and more *heinously aggravated*, than the Sins of others.

There may be this Inconvenience in a Confession *very short* and *General*, that takes in all, that it does not so well *serve* to excite or to express that due sense of sin, nor to exercise that humility and self-abasement wherewith we should always Confess our Sins to God. On the other hand, the Inconvenience of a *very Particular* and *Distinct* Confession of Sins will be this, That some Sins, with their Aggravations, may be Confessed in the Name of the whole Congregation, of which it is by no means to be supposed that all are guilty; and then they who through the Grace of God have been kept from them, cannot in good earnest make such Confession.

Now I take it, that the Confessions of Sin in the *Daily* and in the *Communion Service*, are so Judiciously framed as to avoid both extreams: Since the Expressions have that large meaning as to take in the case of the best of the Congregation, who may in good earnest use them, and thereby joyn their Confessions with the rest. And on the other side, though they are General, yet they are so affectionately amplified, that they may well serve to express that Contrition which they ought to feel who labour under the Conscience of most heinous sins; and, if they come duly prepared, to excite a godly sorrow for sin, and to exercise a due sense of their own unworthiness of God's Mercy. And I desire those who are made to believe otherwise, that they would venture to use their own Judgment in this matter, and upon this occasion seriously to read over those two Confessions in our *Liturgy*; the one, that which our daily Worship almost begins with; the other, in the *Communion Office* before the *Abso-lution*. And then let them judge impartially, as in the fear of God, if I have not said the Truth.

But, besides this, the Confession of Sin, after the Minister has recited each of the *Ten Commandments*, is not only General enough to take in all sorts of Men; but it seems also to be as particular as can reasonably be desired in a Congregation, because it goes particularly through the *Ten Commandments*, to which it has been usual to reduce the whole Duty of Man. And this Method of Confession makes it easie for all that consider their own ways, and endeavour to understand their own state,



to confess every one of them to God, yet more particularly, his known Offences in thought, word, or deed, against each Commandment.

These things being well provided for, to find fault with this part of our *Service*, seems to argue want of Modesty or Judgment in those that do so. They seem to believe ours to be amiss, because they believe themselves could make a better. But, if for this and such like reasons, they think fit to break Communion with us, where will be an end of *Division* and *Separation*? I hope none of our Brethren will say, that they are not to make a Confession of their Sins in a way of expression that is possible to be mended; lest by this means they should never make any Confession of Sin at all: Since it may still remain a Question, Whether *this* had not been better left out, or *that* added, after the best care is taken. If a Form of Confession of Sins were Composed by the wisest of them, I suppose he would pretend no more than that it is so Composed, that God's People might safely and profitably use it. And this is that we may confidently say of the Confessions in our *Liturgy*; and if this be truly said, it ought to end the Dispute.

And yet they who Object the Generalness of our Confessions against us, would not find it an easie task to give us better and more unexceptionable. I may safely say, they would not mend the Matter, if they could prevail to have them as Particular as they are wont to be in the Prayers of some that separate from us. For besides that they Confess against themselves so many particular Sins as many sincere Christians cannot in good earnest acknowledge themselves to be, or ever to have been guilty of, there is this other great inconvenience in such Confessions, that gross *Hypocrites*, and other *Carnal Professors*, are very apt to go away with an opinion, that their case is as good as that of the best; since by these Confessions of Sin, which describe their own case perhaps truly enough, it should seem that the rest are no better than themselves. We find it needful to warn those of our own Communion against such like mistakes, though they are not in so much danger of falling into them. We are afraid lest they that live in the Practice of wilful Sins, should think the better of themselves, because we do all confess that we have *erred and strayed from God's ways like lost sheep, and have followed too much the devices and desires of our*  
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own hearts, and have offended against the holy Laws of God, and have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and have done those things which we ought not to have done, and that manifold sins and wickedness, in thought, word, and deed, have most grievously been committed by us, against the Divine Majesty, whereby we have provoked most justly his wrath and indignation against us. But 'tis not hard for us to shew these Men, that all this may be truly Confessed by the sincere and godly, as well as by Hypocrites ; that though the Confession does not mention a difference, yet it does not imply, that there is no difference between them, but after all, that these are in a state of Impenitence and Damnation, while those are in a state of Salvation, who yet truly confess their Sins in the same General Words with the rest of the Congregation. But there is greater danger of this self-flattery we are speaking of, where the Common Confession of Sins is so very particular as some would have ours to be. And though there is greater need of Caution against it in such places, yet the way of their Confession makes the Mistake more difficult to be prevented.

Indeed we find in the *Scripture* Examples of Holy Men confessing such Sins as themselves were not guilty of. Thus did *Jeremiah*, *Nehemiah*, *Ezra*, &c. But this was upon Solemn Humiliation for those known and publick Idolatries of the Nation, which had brought God's heavy Judgments upon them, or for Common and Scandalous Transgressions afterward. They considered themselves as part of that Community which had provoked God to send them into Captivity, and therefore they bore their part in the Common Calamity with such meekness, and confessed the Common Sins with such humility, as if themselves had offended as greatly in their own Persons as their Countrey-men had done. But I conceive there is a great deal of difference between those Confessions of Sin, that such extraordinary occasions of Publick Humiliation require, and those that are fit for the ordinary Service of God in the constant and stated Assemblies of the Church.

But it ought not to be forgot, that those particular Confessions of Sin, which some Men want in our Liturgy are not properly the matter of that Publick Service we are to offer daily unto God in *Religious Assemblies*, but of that Private Devotion which is necessary to be performed in our Closets. And if

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we could be persuaded seriously to enter upon this Work of Examining our selves impartially concerning those Sins which we have more openly or secretly committed, and then to humble our selves before God for them, with particular Confessions and suitable Prayer for his Grace and Pardon ; we should then find our Affections prepared to comply with those more General Confessions of Sin, which we make with the whole Congregation ; we should then have less reason to complain, that those Confessions are not apt to move us, because this way would cure the *deadness of our hearts*, which commonly are most to blame, when we find fault with the means that God hath provided for us.

To conclude this Matter, There is great need of *Particular Confession of Sins in Religious Assemblies*, but that of another sort than what I have yet been speaking of ; and that is the particular and humble Confession which every *Scandalous Sinner* ought to make in the *Congregation*, for the satisfaction of the Church, and the declaration of a true Repentance. This is not properly an Act of *Worship*, but of *Discipline*, but alas ! almost lost in this miserably divided state of the *Church* ; a loss never enough to be lamented ! For so it has fallen out, that by quarreling for a Reformation in things of an Indifferent Nature, that ought to be left to the Prudence of Governours ; and the Communion of *Christians* is broken, and the Spiritual Authority which *Christ* left in his *Church* is exposed to Contempt, which is a Matter of a thousand times more concern, then all the Objections against the *Book of Common Prayer* put together, though they were as considerable as our Adversaries seem to believe they are.

The second Objection I shall take notice of, is that against the *shortness of the Collects*, by reason of which it is pretended, that the Prayer is *often suddenly broken off*, and *then begun again* : And this is thought not so agreeable to the *Gravity* *wherein this Duty ought to be performed*, nor so likely a means of exciting *Reverence and Devotion* in the People, as *one continued Form of Prayer* that might be as long as all those put together. Now in answer to this, I say,

1. That the meer *shortness* of a Prayer, is not to be found fault with by any understanding *Christian* ; since this would be to disparage that *Form* of Prayer which our *Lord* taught his Disciples, it being not much longer than most of our *Collects*, and not so long as some of them.

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2. That it will be hard to prove, That *many* of these short Prayers being offer'd up unto God one *immediately* after another, is either not so *Grave* or not so *Edifying*, as one *Continued Form*. I do not believe the difference to be so great, as it is made by those that do not approve our way. For the *Work of Praying* is as much continued all the while, as if there were but one Continued Form. Indeed, in the Book the *Printed Prayer* breaks off somewhat often, and there is a *distinction* made between the several *Collects*, by a New *Title* shewing the Matter of the Prayer, and by beginning a New Line. But I hope our Brethren do not mean, that in this there is a defect of Gravity, or any hindrance of Devotion and Edification. For the *abruption* of the *Printed Forms* is by no means an interruption of our Prayer; since we still go on in Praying or in giving Thanks to God, and without breaking off, pass from one Petition, or Matter of Invocation, to another, as immediately as if the Distinct Forms we use together were all brought into the Compass of One.

And as there is no Interruption of *our Praying*, caused by the frequent beginning and ending of the *Collects*; so neither can this cause an Interruption of *Attention* in the People, which is rather helped by that frequency of saying *Amen*, which this way requires. Nor can it be charged with a tendency to Interrupt that *Devout Affection*, and *Godly Disposition* of Mind, which is the best thing in Prayer: But on the other hand, this may be kept alive and more effectually secured, by calling upon the *Name of God*, and pleading the *Merits of Christ* so often as we do. I know some have said, this is done more frequently than is meet. But it would be a lamentable thing, if there should be any difference about this Matter. When the Decence and Convenience of a thing is considered, we should attribute much to the Wisdom of Authority, and to the Judgment of Prudent and Holy Men, such as our first Reformers were, and great numbers of Learned Persons since their time were also, who thought this manner of Praying to be Grave and Edifying. And I believe others would be of the same Mind, if they would not altogether dwell upon their Prejudice against our way; but attend a little to those Considerations that favour it, and which discover the advantage and usefulness of it; which sort of Equity they that are Wise and Humble will shew to all Men, much more to their Governours.

Now the Invocation of God somewhat often by his Attributes, does of it self tend to maintain in our Minds a reverend sense of his Majesty and Presence, which we all know is of necessary use to make us Pray unto him as we ought to do. I make no question but those that have been blamed for repeating *Lord, Lord*, so very often in their *Extempore* Prayers, would think themselves somewhat hardly used, if they should not be believed, in saying, that this was not for want of Matter, but for the exciting of a reverent sense of God's Authority in themselves and others. And I think there is a little more reason why this Construction should be made of the frequent calling upon God by his Name and Perfections, in the Prayers of the Church.

In like manner the frequency of mentioning the *Merits* and *Mediation* of *Christ*, is profitable for the strengthening of our Faith and Assurance that we shall be heard. And to Pray unto God in the Name of *Christ* being the most distinguishing Character of our *Christian* Devotion, This also will justify our frequent use of it. And the reason is so much the stronger, because this is one main thing that distinguisheth us from the Church of *Rome*, which pretendeth the Mediation of the *Virgin Mary*, and the *Angels*, and the *Departed Saints*, as well as of *Jesus Christ*. And it had not been so agreeable to the Principles of the Reformation, to have left the Name and Mediation of *Christ* out of the Conclusion of any of the Collects, when this Church declared her detestation of calling upon God in any other Name, but the Name of *Christ*. This is all I shall say to this Matter; and I hope enough is said to remove the Prejudice of all Sober and Understanding Persons against the *shortness* of the Collects, and against the recital of the Name or Attributes of *God*, and of the Name and Merits of *Christ* in every one of them.

The next Exception I shall take notice of, is that against the Repetition of the *Lord's Prayer* in the Offices of the Liturgy, and of that Hymn, *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, &c.* and of that Petition, *Lord, have mercy upon us*, and the like.

Now I hope that they are but very few, and I heartily wish they were none at all, that so little understand the *Christian Religion*, as to disapprove all use of these Forms in our Worship: I do not mean of the *Lord's Prayer* only, but of those Affectionate Peti-



Petitions, *Lord, have mercy upon us, Christ, have mercy upon us*, and of that excellent *Doxology*, *Glory be to the Father, &c.* which moreover contains a short Confession of our Faith, in opposition to the *Arians* and *Socinians*. But that which is thought too much, is, that these things are too often repeated, and that regard enough is not had to that Rule of our Saviour, *When ye Pray use not vain Repetitions.*

But I hope nothing of this will appear upon farther Examination. For by our Saviour's Caution against *Vain Repetitions*, it seems that there are some Repetitions which are *not vain*, and which therefore he doth not forbid. And this we must necessarily suppose, because himself Praying in his *Agony*, thrice used the same Petition, and that in the *same Words*. Now the Vanity of this kind among the *Heathens* which our Saviour would have his Disciples to avoid, seems to be that Repetition which proceeds from the Affectation of much speaking in Prayer, or from a belief that God will not be moved to help us, unless we use many Words, or repeat the same thing over in a tedious manner. And thus the Prophets of *Baal* cried out from Morning till Noon, *O Baal, hear us ; O Baal, hear us.* We are far enough, I hope, from such kind of Repetitions. And since they are such tedious Repetitions as these, which our Saviour here calls *Vain*, Men should have a care of calling those Repetitions of Good Prayers and Praises, *Vain*, which are nothing like these, especially in contempt of a Publick Rule.

I never yet could find, that those who charge our *Liturgy* with this fault, have attempted to shew us those marks of difference, by which we might distinguish *Vain Repetitions* from those that are not *Vain*, which I think their pretence obliged them to do. But altho' the Gravity and Usefulness of that part of our Service, which they make this Objection against, might well excuse us from any farther Vindication; yet I shall say something to this purpose, for the satisfaction of those that are willing to be satisfied.

I conceive there are these two things only to be regarded in using Repetitions in Prayer or Thanksgiving, that they may not be liable to the Charge of Vanity.

1. *That the Matter Repeated be very weighty and considerable, and that it be singularly apt to move those Pious Affections which God is most pleased with in our Addresses to him.* And in this



respect I dare say there is no sober Christian but will grant our Repetitions to be secured from Vanity. Such Petitions as, *Lord, have mercy upon us*, deserve the putting forth of the whole strength of our Desires and Affections. And when we ascribe *Glory to the Holy Trinity*, we express what we ought to make the end of all our Worship, and of all the Actions of our Lives. And therefore these things will bear being Repeated, and the Repetition of them may be profitable both to excite and to express the fervour of our Minds. And I trust we shall agree, that if any one Form of Prayer will bear being used more than once, when we Worship God, it is the *Lord's Prayer*.

2. The second thing required to secure Repetitions from Vanity, is, That they be *framed with Judgment*, both with regard to the frequency, that they do not come over too often, and with regard to the disposal of them, that they come in fitly and in due place. I do not mean that this is so very nice a thing, that the difference of an hair's breadth, as we use to say, will spoil all: For in things of this Nature there is a Latitude in which Prudent Men may take their choice; but only that this is to be done with discretion and choice, and with respect to the Ends for which Repetitions may be useful. And I am persuaded, that this also is not wanting in our *Liturgy*. For I do not find, that this was ever Objected against the Repetitions we mean, that they are ordered injudiciously, unless upon the only account of too much frequency. And yet the *Lord's Prayer* is but twice in the Ordinary Service, and but once in every other distinct Office of Prayer or Thanksgiving. The *Gloria Patri* is used but once at our beginning to Praise God with Spiritual *Hymns*, and once at the Conclusion of every *Psalms*, and of some of the *Hymns*, besides one recital thereof in the *Litany*, when that is used. And as for those short Ejaculations, *Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us*; the former is repeated but once in the Ordinary Service, and both but twice in the *Litany*. So that there is no such ground of Complaint as is pretended, that there are many Repetitions in our Form of Worship, much less that those are Vain which are there. And I do not see how they that charge our *Common-Prayer Book* with Vain Repetitions upon these accounts, can have a reverent esteem of the 136 *Psalms*, where for 26 Verses together, *His mercy endureth for ever*, is repeated in every Verse.

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There is indeed one thing more requisite to secure our Repetitions of the same thing in calling upon God from being Vain, and that is, That our Desires and Affections should be raised to keep pace with our Expressions. But this belongs to us to take care of. And if we would endeavour to stir up in our selves that Zeal and Devotion of Heart, which should answer that Appearance thereof which these Repetitions make, this would satisfy us beyond all other Argument, that they are not Vain. To conclude this Matter, I desire those who do not yet approve our Repetition of the *Lord's Prayer*, and the other short Devotions, to consider whether it be so easie to spend the time it takes up more profitably, than by joining in good earnest with the Congregation in these Prayers.

In the next place, the *Responsals* of the Congregation are Matter of Offence to some Persons: They do not approve the *Peoples saying the Confession and the Lord's Prayer after the Minister*, nor their alternate Reciting some Petitions in the Daily Service, with the *Psalms and Hymns*, and least of all do they approve that part which the Congregation bears in the Prayers of the Litany.

Now it were well, if they, who blame our Prayers upon this account, would consider what has often been said to shew the Usefulness of this Way. Namely, That it is apt to *check a wandering Spirit*, and to *help and relieve Attention*; and withal, that it tends to *quicken a lively Forwardness and Zeal in God's Service*, whilst we *invite and provoke one another to Pray* and to give Thanks. These things we say not without some experience of their Truth, and we think they carry plain Reason along with them, and I do not find that they have been Contradicted by the Leaders of the Dissenting Party. It is true, they have declared their dislike of this way, but still without taking notice of what may be said for it. If I have observed right, the main Reason of their dislike is this, That the Minister, as they say, is appointed for the People in all Publick Services appertaining to God, and that the Scripture makes the Minister to be the Mouth of the People to God in Prayer. And therefore I shall Examine this Reason in the first place.

And, 1. If it were granted that the Scripture maketh the Minister to be the Mouth of the People to God in Publick Worship; yet this must by no means be so Interpreted, as to make all Vocal Prayer and Thanksgiving in Religious Assemblies unlawful.



lawful to the People. For then they must not declare their Assent to the Prayers which the Minister utters, by saying *Amen*, which yet the Scripture approves, and is not disapproved by any of those who Object our way against us. Nor must it be so taken, as if the People were to be excluded from a Vocal Part in Praising God by *Hymns* and *Spiritual Songs*. For this also is warranted by Scripture, and seems to be confessed by our Dissenting Brethren, who allow the People to *Sing Psalms* with the Minister.

Now he that audibly says *Amen* to the Prayers of the Congregation, makes a *short Responsal* to the Minister: And moreover, they that sing *Psalms*, in which there are Passages of Prayer, Confessions, or Petitions, containing matter of Invocation proper for us, as the *Psalms* often do, they pray Vocally. So that notwithstanding what is pretended concerning the Ministers being the Peoples Mouth to God, it shall still be lawful for the People, sometimes to joyn *Vocally* in Prayer as well as in Praise, and not only by saying *Amen*, but by expressing the very words of *Confession* or *Petition*.

But 2<sup>ly</sup>. Where is it said in Scripture, that *the Minister is the Mouth of the People to God*, or that no Prayer may be offered up to God in *Religious Assemblies*, otherwise than by the *Mouth of the Minister*? I doubt these sayings are grown so familiar amongst some People, that they believe them to be the Words, or very near the Words of Scripture: But there are no such Words nor meaning in the *Bible* that I can find, or that they have found for us. It is not good to pretend the Authority of Scripture for a Doctrine that is not to be met with there.

It is true, that the Minister is the Mouth of the People to God in all those Prayers which he utters for them, and because these are many more than what the People themselves utter, he may be said to be their Mouth to God *Comparatively*, but not *Absolutely*. It will be true also, that the Minister is appointed for the People in all Publick Services appertaining to God, if this be understood for the *most part*, or of *All* with little exception. Some Publick Services there are which are inclosed in his Office, and he is appointed for them in *behalf* of the People; that is, for *Administering the Sacrament*, *Absolving the Penitent*, and *Blessing the People*. And therefore Prayers that immediately concern these things are to be pronounced by him only. And as for the rest



rest, the Order of the Church, and the *Authority and Dignity* of the Ministerial Function, makes it fit and decent that the Minister should utter *most* ever of them; and that in those where- in the People have their part, he should ever *go before*, and *lead* them, and *guide* the whole performance: which is all taken care for in our *Liturgie*.

I said before, that the Dissenters do not utterly debar the People from all Vocal Prayer and Thanksgiving of their own in God's Solemn Worship. And therefore it were great pity that they should keep at a distance from us upon Questions of this Nature. And I heartily intreat them to consider, Whether they may not upon their own Principles come up to the Rules and Customs of our Church in this thing?

1. If they grant the Peoples interest in Vocal Praise, let them consider whether they have reason to Condemn the Peoples bearing a part in any of the *Hymns* and *Psalms* by *alternate Responses*. For the plain End of reciting those *Psalms* in the Congregation, is to Praise and Magnifie God's Name, and to excite in our Hearts such like devout Affections in doing so, as those Holy Men felt in themselves, who were assisted by God's Spirit in Composing them. And therefore the Dissenters are not obliged to demand that the People be silent all this while. I have heard some of them say, that if these *Psalms* and *Hymns* were *Sung*, the Congregation might then challenge to put in their Voices with the Minister. But when they are *read*, as they generally are in our Parish-Churches, they say this ought to be the Work of the Minister only. But I cannot see why singing or not singing should make such a Difference. I grant it were better if they were every where sung, because this is more suitable to the Design of *Psalms*, than bare *reciting* is. But if they be not sung (which is customarily omitted in Parish-Churches, for want of skill, as I conceive) the next use of them that is most agreeable to their Nature and Design, is not that the Minister should *read all*, as he does other parts of the Scripture; but that the People should *recite* the *Psalms* and other Godly *Hymns*, with the Minister by way of *Answering in turns*, as the Custom is with us, more or less in most Places. For when the People rise up to do this in order to the Solemn praising of God, this is much nearer to singing, wherein the People are allowed to bear a part in God's Vocal Praise, than the Ministers

sters reciting all himself, and shutting out the People from any part thereof.

But it is Objected particularly against the reciting of *one* Verse of the *Psalms* by the Minister, and *another* by the People, that the Peoples Verse is in a manner lost to some of the Congregation, since in the *confused murmur of so many Voices nothing can be distinctly heard*.

Now if our Brethren should admit of what has been already said in Vindication of these Responsals; I hope this Objection will not be insisted upon. I grant, that which is uttered in the Congregation ought to be understood. But then those Verses of the *Psalms* which are uttered by the Congregation may be well enough understood by every one that has a Book, or who is acquainted competently well with the *Psalms* themselves. I need not say much in answer to this Objection, because it may be removed by every one that makes it, if he can read, and will bring a Book along with him. And as for those that cannot, I must needs say, that it is not so hard as is pretended for them also to take those Verses which are uttered by those that are near them, if they will carefully attend. And I have been credibly informed, that some devout People that *could never read*, have attained to an ability of reciting most of the *Psalms* without Book, by often hearing them in those Churches where they are *alternately recited*; which shews that the *Murmur* is not so *confused*, but that the Words may be heard distinctly enough to be understood, if one has a mind to it. And then they that cannot read may by this means be more quickned, than otherwise they would be, to learn to read; however to attend, and to learn the *Psalms* without Book, that they also may bear their part *Vocally* with the Congregation in God's Praises.

I shall add, That for the most part the *Psalms* are recited alternately in those Churches only, where it may be reasonably presumed that the whole Congregation can read, very few excepted. For by the way, this method of reading the *Psalms* is not Commanded, but every Parish-Church is left at liberty to observe her own Custom about it. In the *Country* Parishes the Minister generally recites all, (which way I do not think so convenient as that of *Responsals*, for the Reason I gave before) But there ought to be no Breach amongst us about



about things of this Nature, in which one way may perhaps be more convenient in one respect, and the contrary more convenient in another ; and then we should not altogether dwell upon Considerations that favour our own opinion, but attend also to those that may be offered for another, and put the best construction upon it, especially in favour of a Publick Rule, or a received Custom. This is more *Christian-like*, and will be more for the honour of Religion, and the good of other Mens Souls, and for our own Comfort at last, than to strain our utmost Wit to find faults with, and to aggravate Inconveniences against the Laws or Usages of the Church where we live. This that I am now speaking of, is not a *Law* imposed on all the Churches of our National Communion, but a *Custom* of some of them, which I thought good to defend, that they who think not so highly well of it as I do, may not yet break Communion with those that use it. And I hope our Brethren, who grant the People are not to be excluded from Vocal Praise, will consider that there is no inconvenience in uttering the *Psalms* by *Responsals*, but that which is pretended concerning the difficulty to understand what is said : And that there is very little reason for this pretence, seeing the *Psalms* are the most *known* parts in the *Bible*, and that if those few who cannot read, will be careful, they may reap great benefit by attending to the Congregation, as some have done, till themselves have been able to recite the *Psalms*.

2. If they grant it Lawful and Expedient, that the People should joyn in Vocal Praise ; I cannot see how they can Dispute the lawfulness or expedience of their joyning with the Minister sometimes in Vocal Prayer. It will not be easie to shew a Reason why this should be disallowed, if that be allowed. If it be said, there is some Example and Warrant in the Scripture for the one but not for the other ; it seems to be a good answer, that there is such a parity of reason, as that the express warrant of the Scripture for one, is an implied Warrant for the other : Unless a Man will say, that *Nothing must be done in Gods Worship, for which there is not express and particular Warrant* ; which though a Man may say when he is opposing a way of Worship which he likes not, yet he will not say it, when he comes to defend his own. It is a Principle that no Man will stand by, though sometimes he may take it up to serve a turn. The truth is, the

Scripture does not pretend to give us a perfect account of the Order and Manner of the Solemn Worship of God either in the *Synagogues* of the *Jews*, or in the *Churches* of *Christians*; nor to prescribe a Form for the Service of God by the Church in after times. Several things were done in the *Religious Assemblies* of *Christians* first of all, that were peculiar to the extraordinary effusion of the Spirit in those times, and several that were fit enough for the conduct of God's Service when Miracles should cease; and of both sorts *some* are intimated in *St. Paul's* two Epistles to the *Corinthians*; but no Man that understands these things will say, that they are all intimated there, or any where else in the *New Testament*. And therefore it does not follow that they did not observe in their Worship, this or that Custom; from hence, that we do not find it written that they observed it. We do not read that the *Lords Prayer* was used in the time of the Apostles; but I suppose they are very few who will therefore make a question whether it was used or not. We are able to shew that the Peoples joyning in Vocal Prayer with the Minister was very anciently practised. In imitation of the way of the Christians, *Julian the Apostate Naz. Orat. 3.* appointed a Form of Prayer for the *Heathen*, to be creited in Parts; which shews that this was a known Custom of the Church in those days, and that it had been generally practised before. And if this was the Primitive way, it is more probable that it was the way in the *Apostles time*, than that it was not. But of this let every one Judge as he sees cause. This is certain, That the Apostles left the Governours of the Church under the Obligation of ordering the Service of God according to General Rules, and prescribed that all things should be done Decently and in Order, and to Edification. And I do not think that our Brethren will ever be able to shew, that this Practise which they except against, is not agreeable to such general Rules; which yet they ought to do very fully and plainly, to excuse their Nonconformity.

That which is most urged, is, That the People speaking to God in the Church is *Disorderly*, and a breaking in upon the Ministers Office. But will they say that the *Children of Israel* intrenched upon the Priest, when they *all bowed themselves upon the Pavement, and Worshipped the Lord, and Praised him, saying, For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever,* 2 Chron 7. 3.



I have already observed, That Ecclesiastical Order is in this matter secured by the Ministers *Presiding* in Gods Publick Worship, and *guiding* the whole performance of it

But not to allow the People to make an *audible Confession of Sin* after the Minister, nor to *utter some few affectionate Petitions*, and those very short, to which they are also *invited* and *led* by him; this rather seems to favour of an affectation of undue superiority over the People, than to proceed from any fear, lest by this means they should be *incouraged to invade the Ministerial Office*. I believe the *Laity* of our Communion have as Reverend an esteem of the Sacred Function as their Neighbours, and to raise the Comparison no higher, have shewn themselves ever since the Reformation, as much afraid to usurp the *proper Offices* of the *Clergie*, as those that have been drawn away from the Communion of the Church, and have been taught that they must not say a word in Publick Prayer, but *Amen*. We should not think that we endanger our Order, and the respect that is due to it, if we do not arrogate more to our selves than is meet. It has been one great fault of the Church of *Rome* to advance the *Priest* unreasonably above the *People*, in the Administration of Holy Things. The Dissenting Ministers may be a little guilty of this, though in a particular wherein that Church is not guilty of it. They seem to make too little account of the *Flock of Christ*, in Condemning our Church, for permitting and requiring the People to offer up those Petitions to God with their *own Mouths*, which are appointed for them in the *Liturgie*. The Minister assuming the whole to himself, does not indeed make *him much greater* in the Church than he is, but they that obstinately deny any part of it to the People, do make *them of much lower and meaner Condition* in the Church than they ought to be. And it is something strange, that those very Persons who Contend for the Interest of the *Laity* in some business in *Religious Assemblies* that more nearly touches upon *Ecclesiastical Authority*, than the bare offering up of a few Petitions to God, should be so unwilling to allow them this. They affirm that the People have a right to be heard before *Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons* are *Ordained*, and as several of them contend to interpose also in all *Acts of Discipline*: and yet they do not think them qualified to bear any part in the Prayers of the Congregation, unless by

saying *Amen* to what the Minister utters. These things do not seem to hang well together. And I am persuaded our Church has ordered this Matter with more Judgment and Impartiality, in assigning to the People their Interest both in Acts of *Worship* and *Discipline*, within such Rules and Limits that the *Clergy* and *Laity* may know what their proper place and business is in all *Ecclesiastical Assemblies*.

I have heard some Object against the Peoples uttering Prayers and Praises in the Congregation, that it is *Forbidden Women to speak in the Church*. But this is strangely misapplied to the Matter in hand. For it is plain, that the speaking mentioned by the Apostle, signifies nothing but *Prophecy*, *Interpreting*, *Preaching*, or *Instructing*; and that the reason why he will not allow this to the Woman, is because *Preaching* is an *Act* that implies *Authority*, whereas the Woman's part is *Obedience* and *Subjection*. They that will read the whole Chapter, will find that this is the true meaning of *St. Paul*. And indeed the place it self sufficiently shews it, which I shall therefore set down. *Let your Women keep silence in the Churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are Commanded to be under Obedience, as also the Law saith. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their Husbands at home, for it is a shame for a Woman to speak in the Church, 1 Cor. 14. 34, 35.* The Subject of this Discourse is briefly exprest in the 39th Verse, *Brethren covet to prophesie, and forbid not to speak with tongues.* Now the reason given why the Woman is not to speak, *viz.* Because she is to be under *Obedience*, does plainly restrain that *Speaking* to *Prophecy*, and the like, which is moreover the only sort of *Speaking* that is discoursed of in this place.

I know no particular Exception under this Head which remains to be spoken to, unless it be, that the People are said to utter the *Words of Invocation in the Litany* for the most part, the Minister all the while *suggesting the Matter of it to them*. But this Objection will be of no force, if what I have said concerning the lawfulness of allowing the People an Interest in *Vocal Prayer* be admitted; unless the Objection be this, That they are allowed to bear *too considerable a part* in that Prayer, and somewhat to the disparagement of the Ministers Office. And then I answer, That, upon Reasons which I shall presently offer, it seems to me to be otherwise. I shall only premise, that I am really



really troubled for their sakes who put us upon this Defence, that in Matters of Prudence and Expedience, wherein there is a considerable latitude to order them well enough, that in these things I say, they seem to yield so very little to the Authority and Judgment of their Governors. I do not think it hard to make out the Prudence of these Determinations so much disliked: This is not the thing I am troubled at. But I think it hard that a *Publick Rule* should not be thought reason enough to justify things of this sort, and to oblige the People to compliance without more ado. I am sorry that our Dissenting Brethren do not consider that it is some diminution to their Modesty and Humility, to challenge, as in effect they do, a nice and punctual account of the prudence of the publick Orders of this Church, before they will submit to 'em in Practice. Now as to the Objection before us. The Peoples Vocal Part in the Litany seems to be no disparagement at all to the Ministers Office upon these accounts.

1. Although the Formal Words, of *Good Lord deliver us*, and *We beseech thee to hear us good Lord*, be uttered by the People; yet it must be acknowledged that this is but *part* of the Prayer of the Litany, that which the Ministers utters being the *other part* and the *far greater part*.

2. That the Words of Prayer are *begun* by the Minister, not only in the Invocation of the Holy Trinity first of all; but in that Prayer *Remember not Lord our Offences*, and *Spare us good Lord*, and *We beseech thee O Lord God, &c.* So that the Minister does utter the *Formal Words* of Prayer, and the People take them all afterward from him, excepting only the Words of that Petition, *Good Lord deliver us*.

3. They are but these two short and known Petitions, *Good Lord deliver us*, and *We beseech thee to hear us Good Lord*, upon the uttering of which by the People the weight of the Objection lies. And if they will allow the People any Vocal part in the Words of Prayer, I know not what Petitions are more proper for them than such as these. As for the *Repetition* of them, there is this reason for it, that there is still new and distinct Matter to which they are applied. And I will be bold to say, that the repeated application of them is a great relief to attention and minding the business we are about, and evidently contributes to keep up an affectionate and ardent frame of Heart,

in desiring those weighty things we ask of God in this Prayer. I could almost appeal to the keenest of our Adversaries, if that Petition, *Good Lord deliver us*, were applied but once in gross to the *Deprecations* and *Supplications* of that part of the *Litany* to which it belongs, whether we should not be more apt to let our attention fall, and to forget the meaning, and to languish in the offering up of those Prayers, than as it is now ordered. But,

4. I think it is plain, that in offering up these Prayers to God, the Minister has the *Principal* and *Guiding* part, in that he utters all the *distinct Matter* of the Prayer, which the People do not, whereas he utters Words of *Invocation* as well as they. And now I desire our Brethren to consider, whether if the People were to utter that which is the Ministers part now; and the Minister to say that only which is theirs, they would not have more grievously complained that the Ministers Authority was slighted in the whole design, since he seemed only to learn from the People what the Congregation was to pray for.

It is of great Consequence with what Mind we come to consider any thing; if with prejudice and dislike, we are then ready to turn all that is reasonably produced in favour for it, into an argument of distaste; and that seems unreasonable, with the quite contrary, to which we should have been more displeas'd if this had been instead of the other. But surely we may judge of these things with *Impartiality*, and if need be with *Candor*, as we ought to do. And if the difficulty of doing so be seen in the frequency of doing the contrary, even amongst Men otherwise good, we have the greater need to intreat of God to enlighten our Understandings, and to rescue us from Prejudices and Passions in the Judgment we make of all things of this nature. I do not intimate this any way in affectation of seeming not to need this exhortation my self; but remembering my own frailty, I do hereupon admonish my self as well as others. In the mean time, if there be any Bias upon my Judgment in that esteem, I declare my self to have of the Prayers of the Church; I must confess that I believe my self to be byas'd on the right hand. For I take it to be much more for the *safety of my own Soul*, as well as the *security of the Churches Peace*, that I should be inclined rather to Judge too favourably



of Publick Rules, than to value them beneath their just worth and usefulness. But I must confess, That of all the Prayers in our *Liturgie* that are of Humane Composition, I should be most unwilling to part with the *Litany* as it now stands there. It seems to be, what it was designed to be, a Form of Prayer apt to excite our most *intense* and *fervent* desires of God's Grace and Mercy. Whilest the Minister leads the People to pray against those several Sins and Evils which a *Christian* is most concerned to be afraid of, and at the end of every convenient Period, the Congregation with one voice cries out, *Good Lord deliver us*; while the Minister leads them to pray for all those particular Blessings which ought to be most dear to a *Christian*, and the whole Congregation with one voice cries out, *We beseech thee to hear us Good Lord*. These Prayers seem to be offered with such affection, as I am not well able to express by any ordinary instance: In offering them we seem to be as passionately concerned as a Malefactor upon his Knees, that begs his own Life. The whole Office is framed with respect both to matter and contrivance, for the raising of the utmost Devotion of good Christians, and for the warming of the coldest hearts by the heat of the Congregation. And in such a disposition it is then most fit to express our Charity, by praying for others, even all sorts of Men, as distinctly and particularly as Publick Prayers will bear. And this the fulness of this Prayer doth admirably provide for, as no Man will deny, who considers it without aversion and prejudice against it; which I pray God deliver all well meaning People from, that they may not deprive themselves of so great a benefit.

I shall say no more concerning this Matter of the Peoples joyning in Vocal Prayer and Praise. And indeed the Reason why I have dwelt so long upon an Answer to this Objection, is, because I have observed, that some *honest* persons are very confident, that in this thing, at least, our *Liturgie* is to be blamed. And I hope what hath been said will to such persons give reasonable satisfaction, that for this thing it is rather to be commended. But because upon this occasion the part of the Congregation in the *Litany* was last mentioned: I shall now speak briefly to some other Objections against the *Litany* which are commonly made.

The first of these is, That we pray to be *delivered from all*  
*dead*

*deadly sin*, which seems to imply that there are some Sins which are not deadly.

Now in answer to this, it is by some truly enough said, That these Words do not necessarily imply a distinction between Sins that *are*, and Sins that *are not deadly*. But admitting that such a distinction was intended ; yet I think no understanding *Christian* has reason to be offended with it. By *Deadly Sin*, a *Protestant* means all such Sin as puts a Man out of a state of Favour with God. But all Sins are not thus Deadly. *For in many things we offend all*, and as for those Sins which the Regenerate commit through Humane Frailty only, they are not thereby put into a state of Damnation. And though all Sin be in its own Nature Deadly or Damnable ; yet through the Mercy of God, and the Merits of Christ, Sins of meer Infirmary are not imputed to true Believers ; and therefore not Deadly to them. But there are some Sins so heinous, that he who Commits them is thereby put into a Damnable state, and till he recovers himself by true Repentance, and actual Reformation, he cannot upon any good ground promise to himself that the *wrath of God does not abide upon him*. And 'tis of such Sins as these that this passage is to be understood, as appears by Deadly Sin, being added to *Fornication*. *From Fornication and all other Deadly Sin, Good Lord deliver us*. So that this Petition seems to be of the same Nature with that of the *Psalmist*. *Keep back thy Servant also from presumptuous Sins, let not them have dominion over me, then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great Transgression*, Psal. 19. 13. Whereas therefore these Words of the *Litany* seem to suppose that some Sins are not Deadly, we should be very unjust to make such a Construction of them, as if they implied that some Sins are *in their own nature Venial*, and so slight, that they will be forgiven without any consideration ; for as I have shewn, we may hold that distinction which the Words suppose, and yet retain that *Protestant Doctrine*, that no Sin is forgiven, but through the *Mercy of God*, and the *Merits and Mediation of Christ*.

Again, some are offended with our praying against *Sudden Death*.

But why should we not by *Sudden Death* understand our being taken out of this World, when we are not fit to die ? For sometimes a thing is said to be *Sudden* to us when we are



not prepared for it. And in this sense can any good *Christian* find fault with the Petition? But suppose, that by *Sudden Death* we mean what is commonly understood by it, that is, a Death of which a Man has not the least warning by Sicknes: Are there not reasons why even good Men may desire not to die suddenly? May they not when they find themselves drawing towards their end, by their good Instructions and Admonitions make impression upon their Friends, Companions, and Relations, to the bettering of them? May not their Counsels be more effectual with them than ever they were before? And is it not reasonable to believe they will be so? As for themselves, may not the warning they have of approaching Death, be improved to make them more fit to die than they were in their perfect Health? In a Word, he that thinks himself to have sufficiently *perfected holiness in the fear of God*, and not to stand in need of those Acts of Self-examination, Humiliation, and Devotion, by which good Men improve the warnings of Death, which mortal Sicknes or extream Age gives them, let him suspend his Act, and refuse to joyn with us, when we pray God to *deliver us from sudden Death*.

There is yet another Objection which I should not have named, but that some of the Dissenters, who seem to understand very little of Religion by making it, have it often in their Mouths. That is, when we pray to be *delivered by the Mystery of Christ's Holy Incarnation, &c. by his Agony and bloody Sweat, by his Cross and Passion, &c. and by the coming of the Holy Ghost*: They say, some of them, that this is *Swearing*, some that it is *Conjuring*, and I know not what. For which sayings, favouring of great prophaneity, they ought to be severely rebuked; and that is all the Answer they should have, were it not that some of them may be grossly ignorant of the true Sense of these Petitions.

And therefore I say, that they might easily suppose, if they would give their Minds to it, that we pray to be delivered through the Saving Efficacy of *Christ's Incarnation and Passion, &c.* And yet I do not take this to be the principal meaning, or that which was intended. For I conceive that to be this, that when we say, *By the Mystery of thy Holy Incarnation, and by thy Cross and Passion, &c. Good Lord deliver us*; we implore Christ, who has already shewed such inestimable goodness towards us, by taking our Nature to his Divinity, to *Die upon the Cross*, to be *Buried*, to *Rise again*, to *ascend into Heaven*, and there to *intercede with*

*the Father for us*, and by *sending the Holy Ghost* to qualifie the Apostles for their great Work of carrying the Word of Salvation into the World : I say we implore him who hath already done such mighty things for our Salvation, and we plead with him by that goodness which he hath already given us such great demonstrations of, by those Wonders of Mercy that he hath wrought for us, that he would now go on to deliver us by his powerful Grace from these Evils which we pray against. And this is so reasonable, so devout and affectionate, so humble and thankful a way of Praying, that I am sorry that any who call themselves Believers should be so ignorant as not to understand it, or so prophane and unlike what they pretend to be, as to deride it. Though God does not need to be put in mind of his former Benefits towards us ; yet it is fit for us to mention them in our most earnest Prayers, not only because we are to make a grateful acknowledgment of them to him, but likewise, because by this means we encourage our selves to ask in Faith ; since he who unask'd hath done such great things for us, will not fail upon our earnest and humble Prayer, which himself also hath required, to give us all other good things that we need, and to deliver us from all real evils of which we are in danger.

I proceed next to consider whether there be any just cause to find fault with the reading of the *Apocryphal* Lessons in our Church.

And, 1. It must be acknowledged by those who allow the usefulness of *Sermons* and *Catechising* in the Church, that those Chapters may be read in the Church, though they are not Divinely inspired Writings, since no sober Man will pretend that the Minister *Preaches* or *Catechises* by *Inspiration*. But if other good Instructions may be read or recited in the Church, besides the Word of God it self, Why may not some Lessons out of the *Apocryphal* Books be read, which contain excellent Rules of good Life, and Exhortations and Encouragements to Virtue and Piety ; especially since those Writings were greatly esteemed by the Church in its purest Ages, when they and other Humane Writings were also publickly read, as well as the Holy Scriptures ?

2. If it be said that those Chapters of *Canonical* Scripture which are omitted in the *Calendar*, would be more profitably read instead of the *Apocryphal* Chapters ; it ought also to be observed, that the Chapters omitted are those of the old Testament, which either recite Genealogies, or the Rules of the Levitical Service, or which relate Matters of Fact delivered also in other Chapters  
that



that are read, or which are hard to be understood. This seems to Apologize for the Churches leaving those to be considered at home by them that have ability so to do, and appointing some *Apocryphal* Chapters to be read, which are more plain, and in that respect more profitable for the Common People : Unless a Man will say, that because the Scripture is all of Divine Authority, it must be always more profitable to read any part of that to the People, than to use any other Exhortation, or read any other good Lesson. And then I do not know what place will be left for Sermons, since as I said before, they are no more of Divine Authority, than the *Apocryphal* Lessons.

3. If it be said, that the reading of these as Lessons is a *prevailing Temptation* to the Vulgar to take them for God's Word, or to think them equal to the Writings of the Old and New Testament : I believe there is no sufficient ground for this. I never heard of any of our Communion that were led into that mistake. It is certain, that our Church declareth those Lessons to be no part of Canonical Scripture, and in the 6th Article saith, That they are *read for example of Life, and instruction of Manners, but that it doth not apply them to establish any Doctrine* : And herein she follows the Judgment and Practice of the Primitive Church, which distinguisheth between the *Canonical* and *Apocryphal* Books, esteeming those to be of Divine Authority, these not so, but indeed Godly Writings, profitable to be publickly read. And why the same use of them may not be retained with the same distinction, I can see no good Reason. For the Church of *Rome's* receiving the *Apocryphal* Books into her *Canon*, is not likely to mislead any of our Communion ; since we are not so forward to take their Opinion in any Matter of Religion.

But in the last place, There is no *Apocryphal* Lesson read in our Churches upon any *Lord's Day* in the year, and so there is not this pretence against Communion with us upon the *Lords day*, when it is that we do so earnestly desire the Communion of those that have separated from us. And therefore I shall at present say nothing to those Exceptions which are taken from the *Matter* of some of the *Apocryphal Books*, as that some Relations are pretended to be fabulous, &c. For this would engage me to a greater length than I intend. But whoever thinks himself capable to judge of this Controversie, may receive satisfaction from what Dr. *Falkner* has said upon it in his *Libertas Ecclesiast.* p. 164. &c.

To proceed : Although the *Communion Service* for the Gravi-

ty and Holiness thereof is preferred by the Dissenters before all other Offices in the *Common-Prayer-Book*, yet that has not past free from Exception. The Passages that seem to be disliked are two.

1. That Petition in the Prayer before Consecration, *That our sinful Bodies may be made clean by his Body, and our Souls washed by his most precious Blood.* Here they say a distinct efficacy of cleansing, and a greater efficacy is attributed to the Blood of Christ, than to his Body; inasmuch as the cleansing of our Souls is attributed to the Blood of Christ, whereas our Bodies are said only to be cleansed by his Body.

Now in answer to this, I suppose it is plain from those Words at the delivery of the *Bread and Wine*: *The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy Body and Soul unto everlasting life. And the Blood of our Lord, &c.* It is, I say, plain from hence, that our Church teaches the Sanctification and Salvation of our Souls and Bodies, to flow from the *Body* as well as the *Blood of Christ*. And therefore that former Passage is not to be Interpreted, as if our Souls were not cleansed by the *Body of Christ*, because they are said to be washed by his Blood. For the saying of this does not exclude the other. When the Apostle said, *We being many are one Bread and one Body, for we are all partakers of that one Bread*, 1 Cor. 10.17. Though he exprest only the Bread of the *Eucharist*, yet no man will say he meant to exclude the Cup, as if the Unity of the Church would be argued only from their partaking in that one kind. And when he said, *that we have been all made to drink into one spirit*, 1 Cor. 12, 13. he meant not to exclude the participation of the *Bread*, as if that *one spirit* which animated the Church, was signified only by partaking of the Cup. Nor will any man argue from hence, that he attributes a distinct efficacy to the Bread, to prove the Unity of the Body, and to the Cup to prove the Unity of the Spirit. I must needs say, that this Exception was sought, but never offered it self.

2. The Ministers delivering the Elements into every Communicants hands, with a Form of Words recited to every one of them at the Distribution, is blamed also, as being thought a departure from the Practice of Christ at the first Institution of the Sacrament. For they say our Lord's Words were, *Take ye, Eat ye, Drink ye all of this*, and therefore the People are not to take the Elements one by one out of the Minister's hand, nor ought any Form of Words to be used particularly to every one that receives. To this I answer:

1. That



1. That it does not appear from those Words, *Take ye, &c.* which are spoken in the Plural Number, that our Saviour did not speak particularly to every one of his Apostles when they received, or that he did not deliver the Elements into every particular Mans hand. For the *Evangelists* may well be supposed to give a short account of the Institution of *Christ*, not of every Word he then said, but what was necessary to be related. And then what might be particularly said or done to every one, would be sufficiently related, in being related as spoken or done Generally to all. That is, if Christ had said, *Take thou, Eat thou*, to every one of them; this were truly related by the *Evangelists*, who tell us that he had said to all, *Take, Eat, &c.* And therefore I do not see how it can be proved, that our Practice varies from this *Circumstance* of the Institution: Tho, if it did, I suppose it might be as easily defended, as the Celebration of the Eucharist about Dinner time, and not at Supper, which the Dissenters themselves scruple not. But he that thinks not this Answer sufficient, let him consult the afore said excellent Book of Dr. *Falkner*, p. 218. &c. where he shall find, that it is indeed more probable that our way is agreeable to the way of the First Institution in this Matter, than that which the Dissenters would have instead of it. But for their sakes who may not have that Book by them, I shall add out of it, another answer which I think may satisfy a Reasonable Man. Supposing then that the *Evangelists* did not relate the Matter *Summarily*, but as distinctly as the Words were spoken by our Saviour. Yer,

2. " Our Saviour also Commanded his Disciples, *Mat. 28. 19.*  
 " to teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Fa-  
 " ther, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: But will any  
 " Christian think it hence deducible, That where divers Persons,  
 " or great numbers are to be Baptized together, the Solemn Words  
 " of Baptizing them *in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of*  
 " *the Holy Ghost*, may not lawfully be expressed severally to e-  
 " very Person? And if the Baptismal Form of Words may be  
 " Solemnly and Suitably to that Sacrament applied to every Per-  
 " son Baptized, by the General acknowledgement of all Chri-  
 " stians, there can be no Reason why the like may not be al-  
 " lowed in the Lord's Supper. Wherefore the Practice of our  
 " Church herein, is no way *unsuitable to the Institution of Christ*,  
 " or the Nature of the Sacrament; and the Alteration of it  
 " would be for the worse, and to the abating the Solemnity of  
 " its Administration, *Lib. Eccl. p. 224.*

There

There remains but two more particular Exceptions which I think needful to take notice of, and those are in the Office of Baptism. And the first I mean, is,

1. That all Baptized Infants are supposed to be Regenerated; of which, as some say, we cannot be certain.

But I desire those that say so, to consider if the *Scripture* does not attribute to Baptism, as much as the *Liturgie* does. We are said by Baptism to be made, Members of Christ's Body, *By one Spirit we are all Baptized into one Body*, 1 Cor. 12. 13. And to be Baptized into Christ, and to put on Christ, Gal. 3. 27. and he that is in Christ is a new Creature. And to be Baptized for the Remission of Sins, Acts 2. 38. Baptism is also called the washing of Regeneration, Tit. 3. 5. Now if it be made a Question, Whether Infants are Regenerated in Baptism; the Question at last must come to this: Whether they are Qualified to become Members of Christ's Body, to be admitted into God's Covenant, to receive Pardon of Original Sin, and to become New Creatures, gaining that State by Grace, which they could not have by Nature? And I do not see, that any but *Anabaptists* can deny this. For they that contend, as we do, that Infants are capable of Baptism, must not deny them to be qualified for this Grace of Baptism, unless they will make the Ordinance and Promises of God to be of none effect towards them. Now if Infants do by Baptism gain Remission of Sin, and are made Members of Christ; they are Regenerated and Born anew. If they do not gain this by it, what does their Baptism signifie? Or what benefit can they be supposed to have by it, if they die in their Infancy, more than if they had not been Baptiz'd at all? This is the only means of Salvation they can have. And those expressions of the *Scripture* above recited, with many more, will justifie our Church, which supposes that this means will be effectual, so long as they are capable of none other, and therefore ought to be considered by those that make it to be of none effect.

I shall only add, That this had been thought a strange Question in the Ancient Church, Whether Infants were Regenerated by Baptism, when the *Pelagians*, whose cause led them to deny it, yet durst not do it directly, because they knew it would not be endured; and therefore they confessed that Infants were to be Baptiz'd, to qualifie them for the Kingdom of Heaven, but not for the Remission of Sin. So that they themselves seemed to acknowledge the saving effect of Baptism to Infants; though as St. *Austine* often shewed them, they contradicted themselves by so doing.



ing. But they durst do no otherwise, because the Doctrine of the Church was so plainly against them in this matter, and every Believer was so settled in it, that I remember St. *Austin* somewhere speaks to this purpose, that the *Pelagians* would have come to the point, and denied that the Baptism of Infants signified any thing at all to their Salvation, and therefore might be as well let alone; but that they were afraid the Mothers themselves of those Children would every where reproach them for it.

The other Objection against the Office of *Baptism*, is this, That the *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*, that answer for Infants, are not their *Parents* or *Guardians*, but others, who have, they say, no Authority to Covenant or Act in their Names. In answer to which, I shall omit several things that might be said, and content myself with these two things, which I think may be sufficient.

1. That in all cases where the Sureties are procured by the *Parents*, there they have Authority to Covenant in behalf of the Infant; and this the Objectors must grant, I think, upon their own Principles: since they contend that *Parents* or *Pro-parents* are fittest to act in behalf of the *Baptized* Infants, as having Authority so to do, since they have the Power to dispose of their Education afterward. For then the Sureties which are by them prevailed with to stand for their Children, have at least all that Authority which the Parents can give them. And this is sufficiently known to be the case with us. And this is that which the Church might well suppose, viz. that the Sureties, which contract with the Church in the Infants Name, would be procured by the Parents; so that the Parents Contracting in behalf of the Infant, is included in the Undertaking of the Sureties; who although they are required by the Church to answer for the Infant, yet are they supposed to be *Authoriz'd* by its Parents also, so to do.

2. The good Design of this Order and Appointment in the Church ought to be considered, which is not the less, for the fault of Men, and the looseness of these times, does often defeat it. For hereby the Church taketh greater security, that the Infant shall be brought up in the Knowledge and Practice of that Holy Covenant into which it is Baptiz'd: In as much as besides the care of the Parents, which is in effect promised, and may be more reasonably rely'd upon without their own Solemn Act, upon the account of that *Natural Affection* which makes them particularly concerned; besides this, I say, there is a *Particular Obligation* laid upon others also, to see that the Infant be so Educated,

ted, as much as in them lies. In case the *Parents should dye* before the Child is grown to years of Discretion, the Sureties are then more particularly Obligated to look to their God-child, that he be put into a way of Learning and doing his Duty. If they *should not die* before, but be *remiss*, the Sureties have Authority to come to them and Admonish them of their Duty, and to let them know, that since themselves were desired by them to undertake for this Child, they as such Sureties are particularly concerned to mind the Parents of their Duty, and if need be to *rebuke them sharply* for neglecting it ; since they did in effect, and to all purpose of Obligation undertake for the performance of it, when the Sureties undertook for the Child. Moreover, when *the Child is grown to years of Knowledge*, and come abroad into the World, *he is liable* to the charitable Admonitions of his Sureties, as well as of his Parents, in case he does amiss, and their Reproofs are more likely to take place, than those of most other Persons. Now, though all *Christians*, as *Members of one Body* are to take care of, and to watch over one another, yet some are more particularly Obligated, and have greater Advantages to do those Works of Spiritual Charity than others. And I appeal to all considering men, if *Sureties at Baptism*, may not with great Authority, and with likelihood of good effect, reprove both those *Negligent Parents* and *Unruly Children* for whom they have undertaken to the Church. The Parents for not minding to educate their Children in the knowledge and keeping of the Baptismal Vow ; or the Children for not hearkening to good Admonition. And in this Age when the Duty of Christian Reproof is so generally omitted ; it were well if the defect were this way a little supplied. But it is by no means desirable that the opportunity thereof, and the obligation thereunto should be taken away. I know some will be apt to say, that this is but rarely practised. But that is no sufficient Answer to what I have said. For when we use to judge of the goodness of a Rule or Custom by the good that comes of observing it, we must look where 'tis kept, though it be kept but by few, and not where 'tis broken. And if the Dissenters have nothing to say against the use of Sureties, but that the end of this appointment is seldom regarded, themselves may help to remove this Objection, by returning to the Church, and encreasing the number of those that do pursue the End of it. And thus doing they shall have the benefit of this Order of the Church, and the Church the benefit of their good Examples.



As for the use of the *Interrogatories* put to the Sureties, and their *Answers*, they are a Solemn Declaration of what Baptism doth oblige all Baptiz'd Persons to, and that Infants do stand ingaged to perform the Vow of Baptism, when they shall come to years of knowledge. This is the known meaning of the Contract, nor did I ever hear of any that otherwise understood it; and therefore I see not why it should be said to be *liable to misunderstanding*.

After all, there is one General Objection yet remaining which still prevails with some Persons, and that is, That some of our Prayers are to be found in the *Mass-Book*, and the *Breviary*, and the *Offices* of the Church of *Rome*. This Objection hath made a great noise, but I appeal to Understanding Men, if there be any sense in it.

No man will say, that 'tis enough to make any Prayer, or Form of Devotion or Instruction unlawful to be used, that the same is to be found in the *Mass-Book*, &c. For then the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Psalms*, and a great part of the Scriptures besides, and the *Creeds* must never be used by us. And therefore whether any part of the *Roman Service* is to be used by us or not, must be judged of by some other Rule, that is by the Word of God. So that 'tis a vain Exception against any part of our Liturgie, to say it *was taken out of the Mass-Book*, unless it could be shewn withal, that it is some part of the *Roman Superstition*. I know it has been said, that the Scriptures being of necessary use are to be retained by us, though the Church of *Rome* retains them; but that there is not the same Reason for Forms which are not necessary; but in those we ought to go as far from that Church as ever we can. But what reason is there for this? For the Danger that may happen *to us* in coming too near them, lies in things wherein they do ill, not in which they do well. And as for the *Papists* themselves, we do not in the least countenance them wherein they are wrong, by agreeing with them wherein they are right. And as for the *Things* themselves, they are not the worse for being used by them. We should allow the *Papists* a greater Power to do mischief than they have, if their using of some good things should render all use of them hurtful to us. The Case in short is this, When our Reformers were intent upon the Reformation of the Liturgie, they designed to purge it of all those corrupt Additions, which the usurped Authority of the Church of *Rome* had long since brought into it; and to retain nothing but what was agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, and to the practice of the purer Ages of the Church. And in this they did like wise Men, because thus it would be evident to all the

World, that they Reformed upon just and necessary Reasons, and not merely out of a desire of Change and Innovation ; since they purged the Forms of Divine Service, from nothing but Innovations and Corruptions, and an unprofitable croud of Ceremonies. No man can shew a good Reason why those passages in the Common-Prayer-Book, which are to be found in the *Mass-Book*, but which were used also by the Church before *Romanism* had corrupted it, are not as much to be valued because they were once used by good Christians, as to be run down because they have been since used by Superstitious and Idolatrous Men. But to conclude this Matter, if any man would set himself to expose the *Mass-Book*, he would I suppose lay hold upon nothing but the Corruptions that are in it, and things that are obnoxious to just reproof ; not on things that are justifiable and may easily be defended. And the reason of this is plain, because the *Mass-Book* is to blame for those parts of it only, but not for *these*. Now for such passages as the *Mass-Book* it self is not to be blamed for, neither is our *Liturgie* to be blamed, if we will speak justly of things, and without Prejudice and Passion.

I have now considered all those Exceptions against the Solemn Service of God by our *Liturgie*, which the Dissenters are thought to insist most upon. Not but that some other Exceptions have been made by the Ministers of that Persuasion : But this I hope was without design to prejudice the People against our Communion, but rather to gain some alterations, which in their Judgment would have been advantageous to the Book of Common-Prayer, and given it a greater perfection ; whether they were right in this or not, I will not now dispute ; being very desirous, as I pray God we may all be, to avoid Controversies in this matter as much as may be. Nay, I believe those Prejudices of the *Lay-Dissenters* against the Common-Prayer, which I have endeavoured to remove, have wrought in them a greater aversion to it, than the best Divines of that way intended ; (I should be very sorry to find my self mistaken in this.) And this consideration was some encouragement to me to give a true account of those things they seemed to dislike most of all.

Which I have endeavoured upon the plain grounds of *Reason* and *Scripture*, almost wholly avoiding Appeals to other *Church Antiquity*, not but that great regard is to be had of it ; and that we can defend our selves by it ; but because they are very few in comparison who are qualified to examine this kind of Argument. And the like I say of the concurrence of other Reformed Churches with us in those things that are disliked.



As for the Sign of the Cross in *Baptism*, it is pretended that this is a part of *Worship*, or a *Sacrament of Man's making*. The contrary to which, has been so plainly shewn in late Discourses, that unless I am called to give an account of it, I cannot think fit to trouble you with this Dispute. But I heartily desire our Brethren to consider at length, that though the use of this Ceremony were not so easie to be defended as I think it is, yet that it is no Condition of Communion, because the *People* are not required to Sign with the Sign of the Cross, but the *Minister* only.

As for *Kneeling at the Communion* of the Holy Table, that is indeed every Communicants Act, but of this you may expect a Discourse from another Hand, which I hope will give satisfaction to all Sober Persons, that are yet unsatisfied about it.

And now I intreat all those of the Dissenting Party, into whose Hands these Papers shall fall, that they would seriously consider, whether it be fit to venture the *Guilt of Schism*, and the *sad Consequences* of it, likely to come to pass, upon such grounds as these: Let us at length consult for the Honour of this Age with Posterity, who will stand amazed to find a Separation of Protestants from this Church, carried on so long upon so little occasion given, and such weak Objections so strongly insisted upon, as to build an opposite Communion upon them. Let us Consult the *Honour* and the *Safety* of the Reformation, and no longer suffer it to be exposed to scorn and danger, to be Laught at, and Disgraced by the *Papists*, our dangerous Enemies always, but never more dangerous than now. If the *Dissenters* are not yet convinced, that the wide breach they have made in the Communion of *Protestants*, will certainly let in *Popery*, if it be not prevented by a timely closing with the *Church of England*: Nothing remains but to wait till they are convinced by the last Extremity. I can take no comfort in being assured that at last they will believe it, when, alas! it will be to no purpose to believe it. I beseech them to consider, whether we are likely to be united in any other Communion, but that of the *Church of England*, as it is by *Law Established*; and whether so little account ought to be made of Law and Authority, as to say that our Governours may as well come down to them, by forbearing to require what they dislike; as they come up to the Law, by doing what it requires. Will our case bear this wantonness? Will such Expressions consist with our Duty? I beseech them by what is most dear to them, by the Honour of God, and the Love of Christ, and the Care of their own Souls, and the Charity they have for the Souls of other Men, that they

they will take pains with themselves to lay aside Prejudice, and Anger, and all Passions that obstruct a clear Judgment of things that have been disputed amongst us, and that they would consider impartially what we have said, as in the sight of God who knoweth the Hearts of Men. Can they propound to themselves more beneficial Designs, that to check the Prophaneness and Atheism which in this last Age hath been so much complained of, than to restore in some measure the Ancient Discipline of the Church for the excluding of vicious Men from the Communion of the Faithful, than to transmit the Profession of the true Religion Establisht among us, down to their Posterity? The most effectual means by which they can contribute to all those good Ends, is to return heartily and unanimously to the Communion of the Church *England*; all the true Sons whereof are ready to receive them with open Arms, with joy and thankfulness to God, and to them, for the good they will do us and themselves by it. But as for them, that for Worldly and Corrupt Interests, encourage and support the present Separation from this Church, I cannot expostulate with them in this manner, *since* such Men have not the fear of God before them, and 'tis impossible they should be touched with tenderness for the Concerns of Religion, while they continue as they are. All I shall say to them is, That when that great day of Judgment comes, which they of all Men have most reason to be afraid of, then all the dismal consequences of this Schism which are likely to happen, will be fully required at their hands to be sure; whilst those that in meer Ignorance and Mistake have contributed to them, shall have an easier Account to give, especially if they have taken pains to inform themselves better.

What good Effect our Applications to Men will have we cannot say; but if it shall appear that they are not yet prepared for Instruction; we have the more reason to turn our selves to God by earnest Prayer, that he would please to open the Understandings of the simple, and to detect the ill Designs of dishonest Men; and to enable us to bring forth more and better Fruits of Repentance, that whatever happens to this Church, *it may not be forsaken of his Favour and Protection, Amen.*

**F I N I S.**